

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 CU-02 EB-08 FAA-00  
DOTE-00 MCT-01 SSM-03 /102 W  
-----241707Z 080616 /47

P R 241542Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3442  
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 243  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
COMSIXTHFLT  
CTF SIX ZERO  
CTF SIX ONE  
CTF SIX TWO  
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO  
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA  
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN  
DIA WASHDC  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1324

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE  
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION MARCH 18-24

REF: BEIRUT 1186 (DTG 170541Z MAR 77)

1. SUMMARY: THE WEEK SINCE THE BURIAL OF KAMAL JUNBLATT  
HAS BEEN MARKED BY KILLINGS AND INCIDENTS. THE QUADRIPARTITE  
COMMITTEE MET TWICE. FIGHTING CONTINUED IN THE SOUTH,  
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AND STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED IN TRIPOLI. ON MARCH 19, TWO  
KURDS FORCED A TURKISH PLANE TO LAND AT BEIRUT, BUT THE  
HIJACKERS QUICKLY SURRENDERED. ON MARCH 21, THE GOVERN-  
MENT FINALLY APPOINTED A CHAIRMAN TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
RECONSTRUCTION BOARD. ON MARCH 22, A PHALANGE DELEGATION  
VISITED DAMASCUS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTERMATH OF JUNBLATT'S DEATH.

A. THE WEEK SINCE THE BURIAL OF KAMAL JUNBLATT HAS BEEN MARRED BY KILLINGS AND INCIDENTS. RESIDENTS OF WEST BEIRUT OBSERVED MARCH 24, THE SEVENTH DAY AFTER JUNBLATT'S FUNERAL, AS A DAY OF MOURNING. JUNBLATT WAS BURIED IN HIS HOME TOWN OF MUKHTARAH IN THE CHOUF ON MARCH 17, THE DAY AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION. THE SAME DAY, KAMAL'S SON WALID WAS ACKNOWLEDGED AS LEADER OF THE JUNBLATTI DRUZES. WALID WAS QUICK TO APPEAL FOR CALM AND MODERATION ON THE PART OF HIS FOLLOWERS. NEVERTHELESS, ON MARCH 16 AND 17, DRUZES IN THE CHOUF RETALIATED BY KILLING AT LEAST 129 CHRISTIAN VILLAGERS, MANY OF WHOM WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THE ASF DISPATCHED ABOUT 4,000 REINFORCEMENT TROOPS TO AREA, AND THE KILLING STOPPED BY MARCH 18. THE ASF HAS REPORTEDLY DETAINED AT LEAST 15 DRUZE SUSPECTS.

B. LIFE IN BEIRUT HAS BEEN RELATIVELY NORMAL, DESPITE SEVERAL INCIDENTS. ON MARCH 17, ABOUT TEN CHRISTIANS WERE KILLED IN EASTERN SECTION OF THE CITY, AND A SINGLE MORTAR ROUND FELL IN THE HAMRA DISTRICT, THE FIRST SUCH SHELLING SINCE THE SYRIAN OCCUPATION IN NOVEMBER. ON MARCH 20, TWO FIVE KILOGRAM CHARGES OF EXPLOSIVES WERE SET OFF NOT FAR FROM THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY BEIRUT CAMPUS IN WEST BEIRUT.

C. CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LEADERS ALIKE HAVE GENERALLY URGED RESTRAINT AND MODERATION. HOWEVER, THE CHRISTIANS  
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HAVE GIVEN PRESIDENT SARKIS A LIST OF OVER 200 DRUZES ALLEGEDLY IMPLICATED IN THE MURDERS IN THE CHOUF, AND YOUNGER CHRISTIANS HAVE THREATENED TO RETALIATE IF THE ASF AND GOVERNMENT DO NOT BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.

3. QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MEETS TWICE.

A. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE MET ON MARCH 19 AND 23 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PRESIDENT SARKIS. ACCORDING TO AS SAFIR, THE COMMITTEE AGREED ON MARCH 19 TO INCREASE ASF PATROLS IN BEIRUT AND TO CALL FOR STRICTER SECURITY MEASURES IN THE CAPITAL. (INTERIOR MINISTER SALAH SALMAN ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 23 THAT MEMBERS OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WOULD HENCEFORTH PATROL BEIRUT 24 HOURS A DAY.)

B. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, ON MARCH 19 THE MEMBERS DISCUSSED A KFUR FRONT DEMAND THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREE ON HOW TO APPLY THE CAIRO ACCORDS BEFORE ENDORSING PRESIDENT SARKIS' PLAN TO DISPATCH A LEBANESE FORCE TO

THE SOUTH. THE PHALANGE LEBANESE INFORMATION AGENCY REPORTED ON MARCH 23, HOWEVER, THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT.

4. MORE FIGHTING IN SOUTH

ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES, ON MARCH 23 CHRISTIAN FORCES SHELLED THE MUSLIM TOWN OF HASBAYAH (WHICH HAS A SUBSTANTIAL DRUZE POPULATION). THE SAME DAY, CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS EXCHANGED FIRE NEAR BINT JABAYL, RESULTING IN TWELVE KILLED AND SIX WOUNDED ON THE MUSLIM SIDE.

5. DEMONSTRATION IN TRIPOLI.

ACCORDING TO THE IRAQI NEWS AGENCY (INA), ON MARCH 22 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TRIPOLI STAGED A DEMONSTRATION DENOUNCING THE PRESENT SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. SYRIAN ASF  
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FORCES SET UP ROAD BLOCKS AND DETAINED SEVERAL STUDENTS, INA SAID. COMMENT: TRIPOLI IS A MUSLIM CITY WITH STRONG NASSERIST TENDENCIES. THE DEATH OF JUNBLATT MAY HAVE GIVEN THE STUDENTS A PRETEXT TO VENT THEIR DISPLEASURE OVER THE SYRIAN PRESENCE. END COMMENT.

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ACTION NEA-10

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6. KURDS HIJACK AIRPLANE.

ON MARCH 19, TWO 18-YEAR OLD KURDS OF TURKISH NATIONALITY HIJACKED A BOEING 727 ON A TURKISH DOMESTIC FLIGHT AND FORCED THE PILOT AT PISTOL POINT TO PROCEED TO BEIRUT. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS, INTERIOR MINISTER SALAH SALMAN, AND THE TURKISH CHARGE D'AFFAIRS WENT TO THE AIRPORT, AND THE HIJACKERS SURRENDERED ABOUT THREE HOURS AFTER LANDING. THE 174 PASSENGERS AND EIGHT CREW MEMBERS WERE UNHARMED, CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCEPT THE CO-PILOT, WHO WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED. THE HIJACKERS WERE PLACED IN DETENTION. OFFICIALS ARE STILL INVESTIGATING THE MOTIVES OF THE HIJACKERS, WHO MADE NO COHERENT DEMANDS. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS TOLD THE PRESS THE HIJACKERS WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT.

7. DEVELOPMENT BOARD CHAIRMAN APPOINTED.

A. ON MARCH 21, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APPOINTED MOHAMMED KARAM ATALLAH, A SUNNI MUSLIM BUSINESSMAN AND ECONOMIST, TO A FIVE-YEAR TERM AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION BOARD, WHICH IS TO COORDINATE ALL RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON AND REPLACE THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING. THE COUNCIL ALSO APPOINTED A VICE-CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FIVE YEARS, AND EIGHT MEMBER-ADVISORS FOR THREE YEARS.

B. THESE APPOINTMENTS WERE LONG OVERDUE. (THE DECREE-LAW PROVIDING FOR THE BOARD WAS ISSUED ON JAN 24.) MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, INCLUDING ATALLAH, ARE REPUTED TO BE CHEHABISTS AND THUS CLOSE IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY TO PRESIDENT SARKIS.

8. PHALANGE DELEGATION IN SYRIA.

A DELEGATION OF THE PHALANGE PARTY, INCLUDING GEORGES  
SAADE, EDMOND RIZK, AMINE GEMAYEL, AND KARIM PAKRADOUNI,  
MET WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABD AL-KARIM KHADDAM  
AND VICE DEFENSE MINISTER NAJI JAMIL IN DAMASCUS ON  
MARCH 22. PAKRADOUNI TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE TWO SIDES  
HAD AGREED TO: A) CONTINUE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN  
LEBANON AND SYRIA; B) GIVE TOTAL SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT  
SARKIS; AND, C) TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO MAINTAIN  
SECURITY IN LEBANON.

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## Message Attributes

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